

REMARKS

A Request for Continued Examination (RCE) is being filed concurrently herewith. Claims 1-24 are present in this application. By this Preliminary Amendment, claim 1, 4, and 7 have been amended and claims 10-24 have been added. Reconsideration and allowance in view of the above amendments and the following remarks are respectfully requested.

In the December 22, 2004 Office Action, claims 1-9 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) over Hatanaka (U.S. Patent No. 5,017,149) or Morgenrath (4,690,476). These rejections are respectfully traversed.

Claim 1 is directed to a plug retaining assembly including a plug, a socket to interface with the plug, and a retaining clip. The plug includes a lug and the retaining clip includes a lug engaging mechanism structured to allow disengagement of the plug from the socket at a predetermined release force applied to the plug. Neither Hatanaka nor Morgenrath disclose the plug retaining assembly as recited in claim 1.

In contrast, both Hatanaka and Morgenrath teach the use of either a locking pawl (Hatanaka) or fastener sections (Morgenrath) which are not structured to allow disengagement of the plug from the socket at a predetermined release force applied to the plug. Instead, both Hatanaka and Morgenrath are structured to prevent inadvertent disconnection of the plug from the socket.

Further, neither Hatanaka nor Morgenrath teaches a method of setting a release force of a plug retaining assembly as recited in claims 4 and 7. Claim 4 includes selecting the wedge angle in accordance with the predetermined release force, while claim 7 includes selecting the resilience of the retaining clip in accordance with the predetermined release force. Selection of

the wedge angle and/or the resilience of the retaining clip are factors which may affect the predetermined release force. Neither Hatanaka nor Morgenrath discloses this subject matter.

To begin with, both the locking pawl of Hatanaka and the fastener sections of Morgenrath are structured to prevent inadvertent disconnection of the plug from the socket. Therefore, neither Hatanaka nor Morgenrath teach or suggest setting a release force as recited in claims 4 and 7. Moreover, neither Hatanaka nor Morgenrath would be motivated to set a release force as their devices are designed to prevent such action.

Also, neither Hatanaka nor Morgenrath teach or suggest selecting a wedge angle in accordance with the predetermined release force as recited in claim 4. The Office Action alleges that Hatanaka includes a wedge angle "when the clip rotates" and Morgenrath illustrates a wedge angle in Figs. 4-5. However, neither Hatanaka nor Morgenrath teach or suggest that these alleged wedge angles are at least partially determinative of a predetermined release force, and neither Hatanaka nor Morgenrath teach or suggest that these alleged wedge angles are selectable to set a release force.

Further, neither Hatanaka nor Morgenrath teach or suggest selecting the resilience of the retaining clip in accordance with the predetermined release force as recited in claim 7. Specifically, neither Hatanaka nor Morgenrath teach or suggest that the resilience of the retaining clip is at least partially determinative of a predetermined release force, and neither Hatanaka nor Morgenrath teach or suggest that the resilience of the retaining clip is selectable to set a release force.

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections are respectfully requested.

New claims 10-24 have been added. Applicants respectfully submit that no new matter has been added in the new claims. For example, support for the new claims may be found on

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pages 17-19, 21, 26, and 33 of the specification. Entry and allowance of these new claims is respectfully requested.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that all claims are patentable and that the entire application is in condition for allowance.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further is desirable to place the application in better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the below listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,

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